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HOMELESS;
OR,
A POET'S INNER LIFE.

BY
M. GOLDSCHMIDT,
AUTHOR OF
"JACOB BENDIXEN," ETC.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."
SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

TO MRS. L. M. ROTHSCHILD.

DEAR FRIEND,

It is the Danish custom for an author to dedicate his work, without asking permission, to some one whom he respects and admires, and, I cannot but think, the English public will approve of my thus taking the liberty to offer you a token of attachment and esteem; for even when the work was planned in Danish, your approval was the touchstone for many thoughts and ideas, and but for your encouraging belief in the worth of some parts, it should never have passed the boundaries of my native land. I owe to you the revision of the English text—a hard task, which you have performed in the same pure, disinterested, earnest spirit, that taught me, in your house, to know the virtues of an English wife and mother, and the noble aspirations of an English woman.

I fear your modesty will be pained by this public acknowledgment to you, therefore pray you to remember that gratitude, also, has its claims, and to forgive,

Your sincere friend and cousin,

M. GOLDSCHMIDT.

Copenhagen, 1861.

PREFACE.

I AM about to relate a simple tale, a life of one—a boy when you first meet him ; a man struggling for activity and happiness as you proceed ; his spirit seeking its home and rest, when you part with him, and close the book.

There is but little dramatic action in my story ; like real life, it resembles a river—a long, steady, winding river—rather than a plot artificially knitted, and solved on the stage. But, in truth, that which is commonly called the reality of life is not my work's chief object and aim. Above that reality which we see and hear of, there is yet another reality—life's true pith, the true goal of existence, which minds of noble stamp dimly see from early youth, though mingled with

and obscured by their passions; and for which they strive, but, alas! often as a vessel without compass, surrounded by fogs. This reality is the ideal.

My tale, then, depicts a life resembling a long, winding river finding its way to the ocean—Ideality, Eternity.

May this tale, though Danish in its conception, feelings, and characters, be judged to possess something common to all humanity—that is to say, may you, Reader, feel that the passions, the longings, the faults, the aspirations herein portrayed, are somewhat akin to your own—and may you follow it, therefore, with sympathy!

M. G.

HOMELESS;

OR,

A POET'S INNER LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

ON the grassplot in the middle of a garden stood a solitary apple-tree, bending under the weight of its thick foliage and half-ripe fruit. Emilie picked up an apple that had ripened too early and had fallen from the tree. Seeing this, the whole flock of children at play on the lawn gathered eagerly around her; but with an air of queen-like authority the little girl, then only eight years old, held the apple high above her head, saying,

“Be quiet, and each shall have a piece!”—adding, with a side glance, “the one who loves me best, and waits most patiently, shall have the largest share.”

On hearing this, a little boy of her own age,

with golden hair and hazel eyes, who was next to her, immediately withdrew from the circle, and stood aside while she was cutting the apple and dividing out the pieces.

Suddenly she cried: "There, it's all gone!" and, laughing, raised her empty hands aloft.

Tears gushed into the little boy's eyes, and his lips trembled, as though violently suppressing a sob; while the other children teased him, because he was greedy and had been disappointed. He was about to leave the spot in silence, when Emilie approached and whispered, while walking past him,

"I did not taste the apple either, Otto; you and I are the only two who did not get any."

At these words an indescribable expression of joy spread over the little fellow's face; without looking at her, he rushed in among the others again, and took the lead in the wild and noisy games, which were now continued among the currant and gooseberry bushes in his father's garden, and in the adjoining grove.

Emilie's parents, *Commerceraad*,* and Mrs. Theilman, lived opposite. The Theilman family had dwelt in the town from time immemorial. Their house was called Theilman House; a little lane running between the gardens at the back, and forming a short cut through the town, was called Theilman Lane. Old events were referred to "the times of Theilman's grandfather;" and as the family had been wealthy as

* *Commerceraad* is a commercial title in Denmark.

long as the oldest inhabitant of the town could remember, the present generation were all born, as it were, with a certain respect for Christian Theilman, the Commerceraad, who had continued and extended the business of his forefathers, but had introduced no innovations. He was a shopkeeper, and at the same time held a good deal of land, carried on a considerable trade in oxen, which were fattened partly on the draff from his distillery; exported corn, and imported coal, iron, &c.

He attended to this varied business with quiet but energetic industry, exacting and receiving obedience from all around him. His second wife, Emilie's mother, was the daughter of a deceased captain in the Lancers; and although she had not received a superior education, she, nevertheless, introduced into her new home, and among her almost grown-up step-daughters, a tone of general refinement; particularly a taste for music and flowers, which until then had been little cultivated in the Commerceraad's house. Whether she had ever contemplated greater reforms, it is difficult to say; at all events, every attempt had failed, and instead of creating a new and modern epoch in the family, she only formed a new wheel in the great mechanism of the home. The Commerceraad liked to see mirth and gaiety reigning in his family; but if some good customer, some wealthy farmer's wife, for instance, dropped in, he exacted that the mirth and the music in the parlour, were it even angel music, should cease at once,

in order that the farmer's wife might be received with due decorum, and be served with a cup of coffee; for such had been the practice in the time of his father.

It was also an old custom in the house, and as fixed as the old chest of drawers, that the parlour was at once dining-room and counting-house. The family knew that it must be so, or rather it never entered their minds that it could be otherwise; and, as a natural consequence of this primitive spirit, the tone of the house and of the pretty grown-up daughters was, in spite of the family riches, and even of the title, simple, unconstrained, and lively—though we are bound to add that there may have been some modern thoughts among them, of which no account was given to the *Commerceraad*.

In the evenings some of the young men of the town, such as the magistrate's clerk, the clerk of the receiver of the customs, or others, would frequently drop in, and time would pass pleasantly in singing and conversation. Now and then great parties were given, at which all the worthies of the town were present; and on these occasions it was the *Commerceraad*'s desire that the full splendour of the house should be displayed, and the supper-table bore evidence of the solid wealth that had been handed down in the family from generation to generation. A child might see and learn a good deal in this house, though not from books.

Otto's home was more humble, though not poor.

Mr. and Mrs. Kroyer had but one child besides Otto, a little boy two years old; they lived very retired, and seldom took part in the gaieties of their rich neighbour's house, and still more rarely made any return. Kroyer had originally lived in Copenhagen, but having inherited his father-in-law's house and business, he was a shopkeeper as well as landowner, according to the custom of the times, though he chiefly traded in corn. He was indeed the possessor of a vessel, a sloop, which he had had built, and had christened "Marie Elizabeth," after his wife. This sloop was the great favourite of the house; in Otto's mind it was one of the family, like the dog Charmant, or still more so, for it bore his mother's name, and seemed to him gifted with human understanding; and he had so often heard them say, "To-day 'Marie Elizabeth' is in Bergen!—I wonder where 'Marie Elizabeth' may now be?—Last Saturday week 'Marie Elizabeth' left Lübeck—God grant that 'Marie Elizabeth' may have got safe through last night!"—And she had got safe through; she returned home, and when Otto saw her again he felt inclined to caress her. Yet he did not do so, her tarry sides did not quite answer to the image in his mind; but he loved her all the same, and caressed her in thought. When Kroyer gave "Marie Elizabeth" a new coat of paint, he felt very much the same as though he had made his wife a present of a new dress. And it was also a well-known fact, that, wherever "Marie Elizabeth" might be on the morning of St.

John's day, this being Mrs. Kroyer's birthday, two shots were fired from the two little swivel-guns on board, the flag was hoisted, and the three men of the crew cheered lustily ! It must have been strange, could any one have beheld the solitary ship, and heard the sudden cheering of the three lonesome men in mid-sea ; but in their minds the whole of their native town was present.

- Another feature about Otto's home, which gave it a particular attraction in the eyes of his companions, was the large garden, with the lawn and the adjacent grove—for this afforded a better playground than could be found elsewhere in the town. Though we call it a garden, it was in fact more an orchard and a kitchen garden in one ; for, except the double daisies with which the beds were bordered, there were no flowers—just as though Mrs. Kroyer declined to compete in any way with the Theilmans—but this was all the better for their children's games.

Many an evening when the sports of the day were over, and each child had gone to his own home, whilst faint sounds of continued merriment could be heard from the opposite neighbour's house, Otto would sit alone in a corner, listening and longing for Emilie, until his mother came in from her household duties, and his father from the counting-house. Then candles were lighted, the shutters were closed, and the supper-table laid. Sometimes a welcome guest would drop in ; but more frequently the family spent

their evenings alone, yet not the less cheerfully. It would be difficult to say why, and with what, they were so pleased, except that the content arose from the mutual love prevailing. When the father was lying on the sofa, or perhaps even on the floor, engaged in a game of romps with the two boys, and the mother playfully trying to lure them away from him, none but Otto could hear the faint sounds of distant mirth. He heard them, or fancied that he heard them; his soul was not quite at home, because his thoughts and his aspirations were involuntarily directed towards Emilie. The mother observed something hidden and mysterious in her child's eyes; and one day when Emilie had told him, with an expression of pride and exultation, that they were to take a sail in the evening, and to have music on the boat, and that Christian Foss, the magistrate's son, was to be of the party, his face bore such an expression of sadness while he was playing, that his mother suddenly caught him up in her arms, placed him on her knee, and opening the bible made him read to her from its pages.

They read about the creation, and the garden of Eden, and the tree that stood in the midst thereof; and Otto's thoughts reverted to the apple-tree on the lawn in his father's garden; and when they read about Adam and Eve, when they hid themselves amongst the trees, he thought of the grove of poplars—and it seemed to him that all this must have passed in his home.

The next morning he went through the garden with his father, and as they passed the apple-tree, the fruit of which hung temptingly low, his father said—

“Otto, you must not pluck any of these apples,”—for it was a favourite tree.

To the child it seemed as though he had heard this warning once before, or as though it belonged to the spot; and he was penetrated by a feeling that he was now put on a trial that would end in disaster; and yet it was with the sincere intention of being obedient that he answered—

“No, father.”

But that very day Emilie came over to play with him, and after a while she said—

“I am thirsty—I think I will take an apple!”

“You may not, indeed, Emilie,” cried Otto, in alarm. “My father has said that we must not.”

She plucked the apple nevertheless, and began to eat it; and then she plucked another and offered it to him, and teased until he, too, began to eat it—not because he wished to do so, but because there was a power that forced him.

Presently they returned within doors. The mother’s eye did not detect the fall in her child—did not see that he had trespassed against a command, and was no longer worthy of confidence and trust. Yet there was a struggle in the boy’s mind—he would fain have confessed all to his mother. But he did not know what to say; and also perhaps he asked

himself, with childish astonishment, as well as demon-like defiance, "Why does she not know it?"

Time passed on. The mother fancied she perceived that something strange and peculiar, the origin of which was unknown to her, had surreptitiously entered her boy's mind, and had raised a barrier between them. One evening she had watched him standing a long time outside an arbour, with a hop-pole in his hand; and when she took him up to bed he begged that the door to his little room might be closed, though at other times he was afraid of being left alone in the dark, if the nursery-door were not left open. In spite of many questionings, she could elicit no distinct answer. When she had joined her husband in the parlour, she suddenly interrupted him in the reading of a popular tale, saying, "There is an elfish spirit in our house; and just as the one you are reading about chooses the best horse in the stable, rides it, curries it, and feeds it at midnight, so has this elf singled out our Otto. He is a good and innocent boy; and yet—he is not—perhaps it is not the right word—he is not so innocent or childlike as a boy of his age should be."

"Why do you think so?"

She narrated what she had observed.

"You are a little goose," said the father, who went on reading.

But in a little while she began again—

"It would be hardly right to separate the boy

from his playmates, and yet I wish he were away from Emilie."

"What do you object to in Emilie?" asked her husband, laying aside his book.

"I can't say what—but I do object to her."

"You are jealous of her," said the husband, putting his arm around his wife and kissing her; a mother seldom loves the girl her son fancies, but the father, on the contrary, makes a pet of her. "That's an old story. I am very fond of Emilie; she is a fine, spirited girl, and very pretty—and who knows if Otto and she may not one day be man and wife? It would not be the first time that such childish fancies had led to serious attachment."

"Oh, yes, it may indeed become serious. Do you wish Emilie were your daughter?"

"My daughter—our daughter?—hm, no, to tell the truth, I would rather have her Theilman's daughter. But if she were grown up, and I were not married to you, and did not know you—hm, no—well, after all, mother, you and I are greater children than even Otto and Emilie—let the children play, and let us be sensible."

"Nay, nay, believe me," rejoined the wife, "Otto should be sent to some clergyman in the country, or else to Copenhagen."

"Must he go immediately?" asked the father, taking up his book again.

The truth was that Emilie had got hold of some romances of chivalry belonging to her sisters, and

she and Otto had been reading them together. Suddenly, as they were sitting in the arbour, reading about a knight and the ladye of his love, she took his head between her hands, kissed him, and then walked silently away. Upon which Otto, taking his post before the arbour, like a knight, spear in hand, and in the true spirit of chivalry, made a vow to watch through a whole night in the dark ; which vow, however, he so modified in practice as to sleep a whole night in the dark.

But, to be able to discover and to understand all that was going on, it would be necessary to watch the children at their sports with a closely observant eye. Their games were carried on openly, and were noisy enough ; but what depths of joy and happiness, what passionate emotions, were interwoven with them, like invisible flowers. When the children, forming a large circle, played "The monk goes forth into the meadow," and Emilie "spread out her mantle so blue," Otto, between hope and fear, waited to see if she would choose him. This she did not often do ; but he always chose her. Sometimes he would feel angry, and determine to take courage and choose another girl ; yet when the decisive moment came, he feared to offend Emilie by passing her by ; and when once in a way she did choose him, when "the monk bid the nun rest awhile," and they knelt in front of each other ; when "the monk bid the nun comb his hair," and she stroked his hair with both hands ; when "the monk bid the nun give him a kiss," and she kissed

him—then every sorrow vanished, and, radiant with joy, he would spring to his feet—

“And see how gaily they dance, the two,
As though they had stolen both stocking and shoe!”

Other games afforded similar cause for mental emotion. Sometimes they would form a circle and sing—

“There is a convent in Austria!
Falderal, the red, red roses.”

Within the circle was placed a girl, representing a maiden shut up in the convent, and outside stood a knight. The song described how he drew nigh to deliver the maiden :

“Then batters he down the great copper-wall,
Falderal, the red, red roses.”

And then the knight would make an attempt to break through the circle, but would generally be forced back again. Next came the moment for the last great effort, and the chorus, raising their voices, would sing—

“Then batters he down the great iron gate.”

However, Otto could never break through the chain except when Emilie stood within; it seemed then to him as though she were really imprisoned—that he must save her, and only this anxiety gave him the requisite strength.

The beadle of the town was named Green; he was an old man, tall, thin and pale, his face bore a death-like appearance; on great occasions he came forth

in his long scarlet coat with its green collar. Such occasions were the market-days, when the farmers' waggons were drawn up in file along the streets of the town, stretching from the two gates to the market-place; for, as in spite of the police regulations to that effect the peasants never would loosen the traces, it was Green's business to go from waggon to waggon and cut them. This was not performed by him as a matter of mere duty, but with a peculiar zeal and zest; his grey eyes sparkled as he executed the work of destruction, muttering curses the while on the "careless, drunken rogues." He never did real harm to any one, but was truly interested in the security of the citizens and the order of the town; yet he was one who always performed the duties of his office with a snarl and a bite. He was a widower and childless—romping, noisy children were an abomination in his eyes; he generally drove them away when he found them playing in the market-place or elsewhere after school-time; though he never struck, except perhaps the poorest among them. His tall figure and pale face, together with his rough words and angry looks, produced the impression that nothing but speedy flight could save the culprits from his stick. This ogre Otto and Emilie ventured to attack in his own den. Green lived in a cottage in a solitary spot behind Mr. Kroyer's garden, and in his little yard was a large pigeon-house. Every one must have something to love, and Green loved pigeons, of which he possessed fifty pairs, some remarkably pretty;

the children had frequently seen him seated in the pigeon-house on Sunday afternoons, kissing and stroking his pets, and cooing like a dove. It was a matter of great astonishment to them to see this austere man sitting there so tenderly caressing the birds. It gave them an inclination to climb up and have a little sport with the pigeons themselves; and, as Green was rarely at home on week-days, the feat did not seem difficult to achieve. By means of their combined strength, they succeeded one day in placing a ladder against the dove-cot, and then, having unbolted the door, they crept in. Emilie chose a couple of young pigeons, with which she played, while Otto kept the mother at a distance with his stick; but one of his blows proved too hard, and the poor pigeon fell dead! Stricken with terror he exclaimed—

“Now the little ones have no longer any mother!”

“Then we must take them away with us,” said Emilie; and they hurried away with the young pigeons.

But in the evening, when the birds, having had no food, began to pipe most dolefully—for the children could find nothing to give them, and durst not confide their difficulty to any one—Otto took the poor little things, and, to put a speedy end to their sufferings, drowned them in a pool of water. Emilie wept; Otto did not shed a tear, although he was sorely terrified at his own deed.

When Green returned home, perceiving that some one had been in his dove-cot, he determined to lay

a snare, and watch for the evil-doers should they return. He had not long to wait; for Emilie and Otto, troubled by remorse, and anxious to know whether at least the mother pigeon had not returned to life, paid a second visit to the cot, accompanied by Christian Foss, the magistrate's son, at a time when they thought it likely Green would be absent. Otto was the first to mount the ladder; no sooner had he crept into the dove-cot than the ladder began to shake, and directly after it fell to the ground. At the same moment Green appeared at an open window, and Christian Foss fled. Green remained a few moments, as if enjoying in advance the triumph he was about to secure—just as a gormand pauses to savour his favourite dish before beginning to eat. But this refined anticipation of the pleasure to come made Green lose the reality; for with firm and ready hand Emilie, seizing the rope which the beadle had fastened to the ladder and with the aid of which he had thrown it down, pulled it from his grasp; and then rushing towards the house-door, bolted it from without, and thus made a prisoner of the beadle Green. Seeing this, the old man tried to get out through the window, but it was too small; and while in his vain endeavours he knocked down the few pots of geranium that graced the ledge outside, Emilie, exerting her strength to the utmost, succeeded in raising the rough ladder, which had been manufactured by Green himself; and though she lacerated her hands in the attempt, set Otto at liberty. Foaming

with rage, Green had in the meanwhile got his one leg out of the window; but however much he doubled himself up, he could not make his head follow, the window being too low. When he saw the culprits about to escape from him he screamed out with half-choked voice—

“In the name of the king, I arrest you, you young thieves!”

But the words did not produce the magic power that he expected, and only made Otto and Emilie run the faster.

Emilie, hiding her bleeding hands, hurried home. Not until the morrow, when he saw her with her hands tied up, did Otto realize how much it had cost her to liberate him; but they did not mention the subject. It is as true of children as of grown-up people, that real feeling is virginal. They felt drawn more closely together: in Emilie the event had increased the unconscious, playful security with which she depended on his devotion to her; and on Otto it had acted as a charmed potion—it was as though she had become the principle of light and heat in his existence.

CHAPTER II.

EVERY one acquainted with the town of R— knows that from the principal or High Street, which really needs no particular name, as it is the only street in the town, there runs a broad and steep road, leading to “the fishermen’s cottages,” an irregular group of hovels on the banks of the Fiord. Otto’s home was situated immediately in front of this road, and he and Emilie used often to get stealthily into a little sledge and slide down the hill, in order to get at the fishing boats. Their companion on these occasions was a little boy, Peter Kroll by name, whose father had been drowned while out fishing. The widow had three little children besides Peter, and had great difficulty in supporting them, though she was in high request in all the households of the town when salting, preserving, washing, or thorough cleaning was going on, she being a pleasant good-looking woman, and an indefatigable worker; but the care of her little ones often prevented her from leaving home. However, when any of the tradesmen of the

town had occasion to send a "walking express" into the country to parsonage or manor-house, Anne Kroll's Peter was always selected, in preference to any other boy, because he was quick and agile as a squirrel, and as faithful as a dog. And when he returned after a walk of eight miles, there was always a thick slice of bread and butter, a piece of cheese, and a lump of sugar-candy, in addition to the eight skillings (about twopence), that constituted his pay. There were periods of the year when Peter supported the whole family, without being at all conscious of it. On Sunday mornings, when he had neither to attend the free school nor run errands, it was Peter's greatest pleasure to watch for Otto and Emilie, until they appeared on the top of the hill. He would then call up to them, "Will you have a slide?" and when, looking carefully round, they nodded assent, he would clamber up with his little sledge, and then let them slide down. He himself generally made the descent in the same way as the Cimbrians descended the Alps, but without the shield, for his nether garments were made of strong sheep skin. They would then all three run down to the water's edge, and Peter would take Emily and Otto on his back, and carry them out to a boat; there they would all three sit in silence, looking wistfully across the waters, while rocking themselves on the waves. Sometimes, when a dark speck appeared on the horizon, Otto would exclaim, "Here comes 'Marie Elizabeth,' I am sure!" and then they

would all watch the speck most intently, or a dispute would arise on the subject. Otto did not really believe that it was 'Marie Elizabeth,' but wished to believe it; Emilie would not believe it, because she disapproved of Otto's affection for 'Marie Elizabeth.' Peter, being an experienced mariner, acted as umpire.

Emilie was afraid of the water, yet, before leaving the boat, she would always get upon the gunwale, and balance herself there, because it gratified her to see Otto's fright, and the anxious way in which he clutched at her clothes.

"Oh, never you mind, let her fall!" said Peter, very calmly to him on one of these occasions; and when they were alone after this, Emilie confided to Otto that "she could not bear Peter."

"Why do you always want to slide in his sledge and sit in his boat, then?" asked Otto.

"It is not I that want to do so, it is you; and you get angry if I refuse."

Otto did not know what to answer, though he felt that what she said was not quite true.

One day Emilie took a picture-book down to the boat with her, and when Peter saw it he was beside himself with delight at the beautiful pictures; he washed his hands, dried them on his breeches and the sleeves of his jacket, and, placing the book on his knees, turned over the leaves, and gazed at the woodcuts, spelling out the words with infinite satisfaction.

"You may keep the book," said Emilie.

"But have you leave to give it to me?" asked Peter, staring anxiously at her.

"To be sure I have, you silly boy!" cried she in return.

Peter was so delighted that he forgot to be very profuse in thanks ; but when they were about returning home, he offered to drag them up the hill. However, he was not strong enough for this, poor boy.

A few days afterwards Emilie found the book among her other books and playthings, but no one said a word to her on the subject. She covered it up hastily, and in the evening took it into the kitchen, and finding no one there, she flung it quickly into the blazing fire. The next day she told Otto with tears what had happened, adding, "You are the only one who is faithful to me!"

Otto felt a quiet, proud satisfaction at being her confidant.

Fate now so destined it that the three children were brought closer together. Otto and Emilie generally paid a visit on Sunday mornings to old Mrs. Hoberg, who lived at the corner of the lane leading to the "fishermen's huts." The old lady was the godmother of both, and had acquired a kind of right to examine their dress on Sundays and holidays, and to see "how neat they looked," after which inspection they were always sure to get "something nice." She was upwards of seventy years of age, and very

wealthy; but her second husband, who was about ten years younger than herself, drank very hard, and she found it difficult to keep her money out of his clutches, although she, as the elder, the more sensible and more sober partner, had, without calling in the aid of the authorities, kept him in a state of tutelage. Yet her liege lord managed, in many indirect ways, to secure to himself the full enjoyment of the wealth of the house.

The Sunday after the little incident alluded to above, Otto and Emilie went as usual to see Mrs. Hoberg; and she, being ill in bed, requested her husband to give each of the children a cake. He gladly acquiesced, availing himself of the opportunity to rummage a little in his wife's cupboards; and finding two large apples he gave those to the children instead of the cakes.

Acting as if by agreement, they immediately ran to the top of the lane, and gave the apples to Peter, as amends for the book, though the subject was not mentioned. But Emilie would not slide down the hill this day, nor go to the boat; and when Otto obstinately insisted on going, she said—

"I am going to the magistrate's with my mother," and they separated.

But when Peter went home he had to give up his present again, for on drawing the apples from his pocket they split in the middle, and in place of the core of each was disclosed a ten-dollar note. Ann Kroll had indeed to bear an inward struggle at the

sight of this rich treasure ; but the apples and the money were, nevertheless, taken to Mrs. Kroyer.

Otto's mother listened to the poor woman's tale, and after a short silence said, with a scrutinizing glance—

"Tell me, Ann, how comes it that you did not keep the money?"

Ann cast down her eyes, pulled the hem of her apron and said—

"My boy Peter was looking at me."

Mrs. Kroyer turned away abruptly to conceal the tears that gushed to her eyes, and then hastened across the road to Mrs. Hoberg.

"Bring me the apples from the cupboard!" cried the old lady, on hearing what had occurred. The apples were brought and counted, and only two were missing. The emotion she endured inspired her with new strength ; she raised herself up in the bed, drew back the chintz curtains, and called to her husband in a loud voice—

"What were you about in my cupboard to-day, Hoberg? Why did you not give the children the cakes?"

"I did give them cakes, dear mother," answered Hoberg. "I am pretty sure I gave them cakes."

"You did no such thing. You gave them apples, and in each apple there was a ten-dollar note."

"So help me heaven, I am very sorry for it," cried Hoberg, hastening out of the room.

"Yes, I have no doubt you are, dear Hoberg.

But don't be in a hurry—there are no more ten-dollar notes to be had. Miserable woman that I am, you will bring me to the workhouse with your drinking—indeed, indeed, you will, Hoberg !”

“What is to be done with these two notes ?” asked Mrs. Kroyer.

“Well, let me see, dear Marie—what is to be done with them ? It is so difficult to conceal money, and yet it is a sad thing not to have any put by. But, let me see—if Hoberg had got hold of the money it would all have been gone by this time ; therefore, let her keep one—nay, both the notes ; and remember, Marie, that when I am dead and gone, Ann Kroll is to have this bedstead and bedding, and two pairs of sheets. Don't forget.”

Twenty dollars are an insignificant sum in the eyes of the rich, but to a poor hard-working lad such a sum is quite a fortune. Twenty dollars ! Peter calculated, with no little trouble, that it was as much as he could have earned by going 240 times as “express-messenger,” and walking something like 400 miles—in which calculation, however, the slices of bread and butter, and the lumps of sugar-candy, were not included. The twenty dollars sufficed to purchase two lambs and a pig, and to pay for the mending of the fence round the little plot of ground belonging to the cottage ; and yet there was enough left to procure a new cap and a pair of linen trousers for Peter, curtains for Ann's bed, a pillow with white pillow-case and a new ticking for the baby's

crib, two new deal planks wherewith to repair the floor of the cottage, and new thatch for the roof. The little dwelling assumed a bright and cheerful appearance in consequence of these improvements, and the very geraniums and mignonette on the window-sills seemed to grow more luxuriantly, as if to show that with the money new courage and cheerfulness had entered the home.

This change in the circumstances of Peter's family was a source of great happiness to Otto—for Emilie suddenly conceived a very warm friendship for Ann Kroll, and always preferred remaining with her to going down to the boat; and when they met in the little cottage it was to him, as though they were in a little world of their own—full of peace, sunshine without and within. Their amusements here were different from the games in the garden at home. Their delight at the two lambs—which Peter and his little brothers and sister loved, and which seemed to share joy and sorrow with the family—was so great that any one witnessing it might suppose that they had never seen sheep before; and true it was that they had never looked at their parents' numerous flocks with the same eyes.

But in spite of this intimacy there was something peculiar in the relation between Emilie and Otto on the one side, and Peter on the other. If Peter happened to pass the garden when Otto and Emilie were at play with other children, he did not venture in, though he often remained so long gazing at them from

without, that he was well nigh forgetting the errand on which he had been sent ; and on these occasions it seemed never to enter the mind of either Otto or Emilie that they ought to ask him to join in the game. There seemed to be a kind of tacit understanding between them that he was to be a humble companion, who was not to be recognized before the world ; and Peter's shyness had no doubt in a great measure contributed to this state of things. Civilization has its instincts, and apparently it is scarcely necessary to teach children in our day the common distinction of ranks. Nevertheless, by some strange freak, when Otto's birthday came round, and he was sent out to invite the children of the magistrate, of the comptroller of the customs, and of the leading shopkeepers to a children's party, with which it was to be celebrated, he suddenly expressed a wish that Peter should be invited. The housemaid who heard him exclaimed, "What an idea ! Is he to dance in his wooden shoes ?" The peasant girl was the first to vote for the exclusion of the boy of her own caste. Otto obstinately persisted, and as usual the struggle ended with tears ; but when he had done crying, and his eyes were dried, and it was explained why it would not do to invite Peter, he was pacified, and went out with the servant to invite his guests. Thus it is that children's experience is widened, and their hearts narrowed.

CHAPTER III.

It was not a regular children's ball, such as we see in the present day, when young ladies of six ask each other: "How many balls have you been to this winter?"—or, "How many dances are you engaged for?"

At that time our country, and the provincial towns especially, were just emerging from the suffering and evil occasioned by the war with England (1807—14), the state bankruptcy, and the distress and misfortunes that followed these events.

There was none of that lightheartedness and freedom from care, nor of that practical sense of the beautiful, which exercises so beneficial, but, if exaggerated, on the other hand, so prejudicial an influence on the education of children.

A new era certainly had dawned. Prosperous times and various well-considered and conscientiously executed governmental measures had developed a greater spirit of enterprise and mental activity, which was soon to be evinced in the first vague demands for political

liberty. But as yet people had got little further than an idyllic enjoyment of life—a delight at the sun, the air, and the light—at their well-stocked store-rooms, and at the prospects of well-filled money bags. When persons of more advanced age assembled together, the evidences of the past struggles might still be traced in their wrinkled brows and seared countenances; their festive apparel was but little in accordance with their figures, bent by rude labour, and with their red and horny hands. In the town of which we are speaking, a number of young country squires who had frequented the grammar-school, the land stewards on some of the neighbouring estates, a few young traders and sons of traders who visited Copenhagen twice a year, constituted a circle of youthful spirits ever ready for frolic and enjoyment; and who, though far from being refined, possessing too great a love for boisterous carousing, were on the whole guileless and good-natured.

The house of the *Commerceraad* Theilman, as well as the families of some of the officials, represented the centres of the gradually increasing social refinement.

The younger generation of both sexes in the town were not troubled with much book learning, and grew up together in the sunshine of a life without care; this calculated to develop precociously in some minds, in which the germs had been laid by nature, an undemonstrative but romantic tenderness of feeling. But let no one picture to himself this young generation as

gifted with all the graces of childhood, save in a few exceptional cases ; in reality the town was at that period known for its "chubby-cheeked, sausage-legged children," as the saying was. And as for dancing, the majority of the parents took it as a matter of course that their children would learn the art as they had done, merely by looking at their elders, not only imitating their movements, but also their simple contentment with the untutored graces of their partners. Nevertheless, in the course of the summer a dancing-master arrived in the town.

But the month that he was able to devote to the legs of the little people did not produce any very great improvement. Even Emilie, who had often had opportunities of seeing others dance, and who had been taught to perform a reel, felt surprised and discouraged at the difficulties of the rudiments of systematic dancing ; and Otto, who had vague presentiments of what it was to be the admired beau of a ball, felt as though he were being led to his last doom, when he went to receive his lesson and was placed in all kinds of difficult attitudes, with his toes turned out ; or made to walk with uplifted head along a chalk line marked on the floor, and had to make a low bow when he got to the door. Was this dancing ? Alas ! every beginning is difficult ! We must stand in positions before we can do the amiable at a ball ; we must learn to spell in order to be able to read the poets ; and even the bright stars above can only be reached through tedious arrays of numbers .

Nevertheless, the children's party took place. The children of each family were sent, that they might at least see other children dance; or, to be quite frank, the children were sent by their parents in order that they themselves might be of the party, and enjoy a pleasant evening.

They were not disappointed. Had ignorant children been let into a large room where lively music was being performed, they would have skipped about and amused themselves delightfully. But the children of our town had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, yet had not eaten enough—an unusual omission on their part. They had learnt sufficient to be conscious that they did not know how to dance, although they were attempting to do so. This led to displeasure and tears; and when the little ones in dismay had retired from the dance, a land-steward asked Mrs. Kroyer to stand up, hypocritically pretending that it was only because the mistress of the house ought to dance a measure. Next to Mrs. Kroyer and her partner, Dr. Siemsen and Madame Maren Jedde were seen dancing. The doctor was very combative—in his younger days he had been particularly so, and another surgeon would have found a tolerable practice in undertaking to cure the bruises Dr. Siemsen inflicted. Nevertheless, the doctor was a great favourite with all, for, as a general rule, he was a lively and good-humoured man, and only quarrelsome when in his cups. He had always a number of anecdotes and

amusing stories to tell his patients ; and his last words on leaving them were almost universally, “ and then we’ll take a spoonful of oil and a little water gruel.” In consequence of this habit his enemies called him “ oil and water gruel,” and were pommelled for their pains. Madame Maren Jedde, who possessed a large estate in the neighbourhood, was the widow of a nobleman, who had married her in spite of her being the daughter only of a poor clergyman, and whose relatives endeavoured, when he died, a year after their marriage, to deprive her of the property he had left. Law-suits were instituted against her, and the local magistrates having been bribed by her enemies, numerous distrains were served upon her, and other acts of injustice were committed, to her detriment. Her forests were plundered in the open day ; and during the years when the prices of corn were lowest, impediments were placed in her way, so as to prevent her from cultivating her land. But Mrs. Jedde defied her persecutors, heroically bore every infliction, and refused a considerable sum offered for the renunciation of her claims. She was determined that her son should possess his father’s estate, were she herself even to die in poverty—and she triumphed. At the time of which we are speaking all the law-suits had been settled in her favour, her forests were flourishing, and her lands in excellent cultivation. Now, while she was dancing with the doctor, her eyes followed her youthful son, the heir of this noble estate, a fine, healthy-looking lad of

fifteen, who was dancing with one of Commerceraad Theilman's daughters.

After these came Jacob Lund, merchant and distiller, and likewise captain of the city militia, a spare, large-boned, stiff-backed man, enjoying general consideration, his partner being the Commerceraad's wife, a lively lady, plump and dark-eyed, a little more than thirty years of age.

But I will not go on describing all the couples, who, elated by the music, rushed onward in the dance. How some of them had learnt to dance I do not know; and indeed, while watching their movements, one might well believe that they never had learnt.

While the grown-up people were dancing, the children came cooly forward again. Some of the gentlemen asked little girls to dance, and a few young ladies tugged along clumsy boys; upon which endeavours were made, more or less in earnest, to restore to the party its character of a children's ball; but in vain. In a corner of the room, among the spectators, sat a married couple with two children, a boy and a girl. Neither the parents nor the children had moved from the places in which they were seated on their first arrival, but sat looking on in silence. These were Manuel Mendoza, a merchant, and his family. They were Jews, said to be of Portuguese or Spanish extraction. The family had immigrated into Denmark more than a century before; yet, with the exception of having learned to speak Danish, the descendants had lost none of the

characteristics which their progenitors had brought with them from abroad. They were still distinguished by the rigid religious exclusiveness, the foreign eastern cast of countenance, and the timid reserve that had become second nature, as it were, in the race, since its migration from sunny Sevilla northward, amid innumerable persecutions. Mendoza, his wife and children, were in every respect like the other Jews in the town, except that the white of their eyes had a bluish tint, and that their eyelashes were unusually long. Either it was the effect of these two distinguishing characteristics, or of their name, which reminded those that heard it of lovely Spain, or of the unassuming pride with which the family treasured the memory of forefathers who had been knights and dons—or perhaps it was all these causes combined, that made the Mendozas regarded as on an equality with the Christians; and involuntarily it seemed that these Jews, whose hearts yearned for Spain, and who prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem, were very different from those Jews who had but one fatherland besides Denmark.

While the attempts to re-organize the children's party were going on, a little girl, whose eyes glistened with gushing tears, said, as a means of escaping herself—"Alfons and Bella can dance Spanish dances."

Alfons and Bella, or Isabella, were Mendoza's children. On hearing their names mentioned, the

two children hung back bashfully, as though they would hide themselves in the folds of their mother's dress.

"Oh, do tell your children to dance! Do let us see a Spanish dance!" now sounded from all sides, while the company gathered round the Mendozas. It was some time before the parents could succeed in persuading their children; but at length the father pronounced, in a low voice, some words in a foreign tongue; and suddenly the boy threw up his head like a war-horse when it hears the clarion's call, and the little girl, pale but calm, followed her brother as he advanced into the middle of the room.

The musicians did not know the tune of the foreign dance, the children were therefore obliged to sing. Alfons sang first a short introduction, a few strophes, addressed to his sister, which sounded like the first part of a war march. The tones of the strange language were like the fragrance of an exotic plant. The auditors thought that it was Spanish, and were enchanted; but it was Hebrew—Miriam's song over the fallen Egyptians. Then began the Spanish dance. The two children moved with airy lightness through its graceful mazes. As they proceeded their movements became more animated and impassioned, and their voices sounded louder. The children's countenances beamed, the father's eyes shot forth fire, the mother sat with downcast looks but heaving bosom. Suddenly the dance ceased, and the children

hurried back and hid themselves behind their mother.

No applause, no thanks were heard, though the boy's voice in particular was surpassingly beautiful. But the spectators, unaccustomed to see any kind of artistic performance, had felt bashful on the children's behalf, because they had done something unusual. The hostess alone said a few kind words of thanks to the parents, and offered each of the children a piece of orange, the golden fruit from the land of their forefathers. She also brought Otto to them, to express his thanks ; and after the boy had conquered the first feeling of shyness, he felt quite happy at taking the hands of Alfons and Isabella ; for he had gazed at them while dancing in perfect rapture, and had felt as though he were beholding angels. Emilie also came and caressed Alfons in a sweet, childlike way. The four children, thus grouped together, were uncommonly handsome : Otto, with his frank, healthy, beaming countenance, and his rich hair that still hung in golden curls ; Emilie, with her deep eyes and lively glances, and her beautifully formed mouth, with the fresh, pouting lips, and arch mischievous expression ; Alfons, with the dreamy, impassioned light in his dark eyes, and his look of mingled bashfulness and genius ; and Isabella, with her gentle, timid face and pale, brown cheek. A breath of poetry was for a moment wafted around the spectators, as if it were revealed to them that they were looking on a scene of beauty. To a spectator the thought might have suggested itself, are they destined to wither at home ?

or, if they are to go forth into the world, how will they come back? How will these fair flowers look when the world has touched them?

At nine o'clock the children and the parents of some went home; among these were the Mendozas. Otto and Emilie alone were favoured with special permission to remain longer. Emilie had been quiet and humble this evening. When the other children were gone, she and Otto withdrew into a room adjoining the ball-room, and there began to run round and round the table. They seemed not to connect any idea of play with this, but continued to run in silence, sometimes side by side, sometimes the one after the other. Their minds were filled with memories of the strange melody they had heard, and of the foreign, fantastic dance; a few detached words, words of love, from a young couple seated near the door, reached their ears; and also sportive words, concealing thoughts of love, from various other young people, who from time to time came to rest themselves in this room. An exotic atmosphere surrounded the children; their souls unconsciously breathed it in. The words which reached the children's ears were innocent, and no one, therefore, heeded that the children heard them; besides, they seemed entirely engrossed with their play. "But little pitchers have long ears," and it is wonderful how many things that have struck the ear in childhood, without being understood, resound in the memory in later years.

"Well, Mrs. Kroyer, are we not to have some